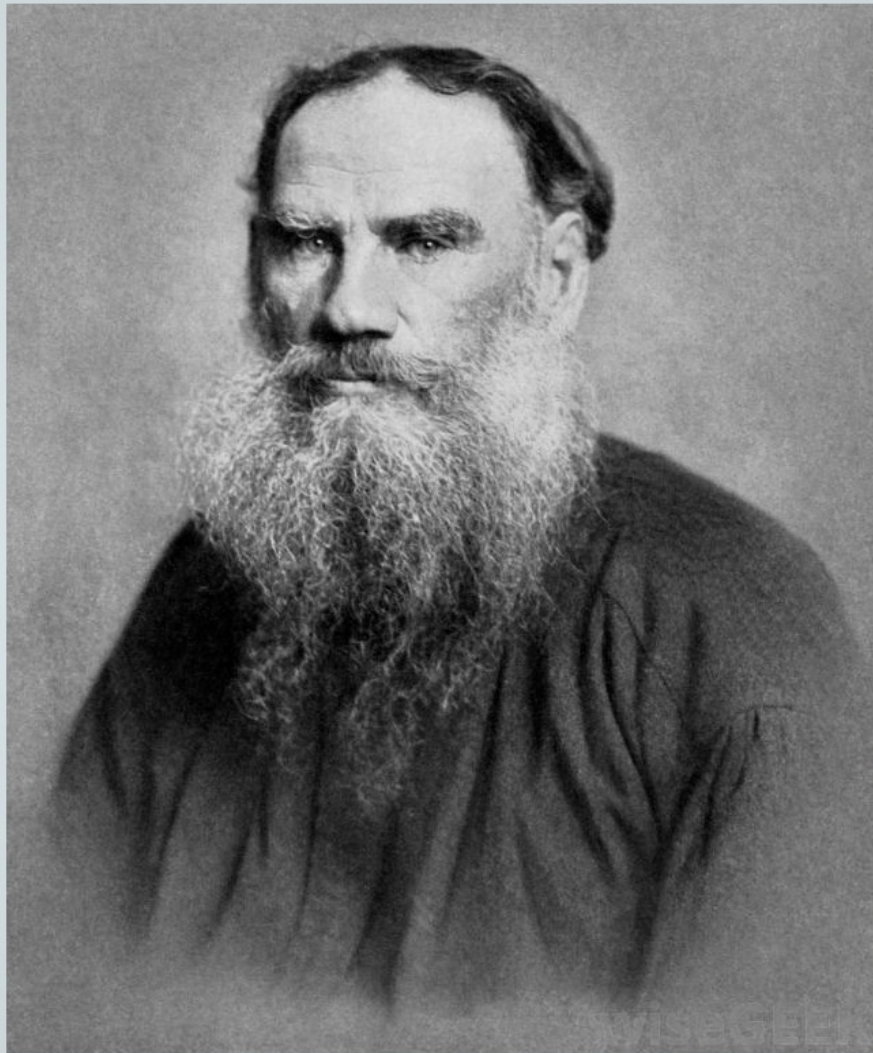


An Appeal



Lev Tolstoy

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By Lev Tolstoy

We can no longer procrastinate or delay. There is nothing to fear, nothing to think about how and what to say. Life does not wait. My life is running out and every minute may break off. And if there is anything I can do to help people, if I can make amends for all my sins, my whole celebrate lustful life, that is only to tell people-brothers that what I was given to understand more clearly than other people, that for already 10 years tortures me and tears my heart.

This is clear and understandable not only to me but to all people, that human life is not going as it should be, that people torture themselves and others. Everyone knows that for his own sake and for the sake of all people one needs to love his neighbor is not less than himself, and if you can't do to the other what you want for yourself, don't do to him what you don't want for yourself; and the teaching of the faith of all peoples, and the reasoning, and the conscience – they all tell the same to every person. Carnal death, which each of us faces with certainty, reminds us that it's not given to us to eat any fruit of our deeds, that death may cut our lives at any minute, and because the only thing we can do, and what can give to us joy and tranquility, is every minute, always, to do what our minds and our conscience orders from us. If we do not believe the revelation, and the revelation of Christ if we believe him, that is, if we can't do to the nearest person that what we want for ourselves, then, at least, shouldn't do to him what we don't want for ourselves! And for long ago, equally known to everybody that, despite of that knowledge, people still don't do to others what they desire themselves, but kill, rob, steal, torture each other and instead of living in love, joy, and tranquility they live in anguish, grief, fear, and anger. And the same is everywhere: people are suffering, agonizing, trying not to see the crazy life, trying to forget their suffering, to silence it, but they cannot, and every year more and more people are going crazy and kill themselves, not being able to endure the life contradictory to the human essence.

But maybe this what life is and should be for people – the way how people live now with their emperors, kings and governments, with their chambers, parliaments, with their millions of soldiers, guns and cannons, all minute ready to attack each other. Maybe people should live with their factories and plants of unnecessary or harmful things, in which they work for 10, 12, 15 hours a day, which kill millions of people, men, women, and children turned into machines. Maybe that is what it should be, - for more and more villages to be emptied and for people to flood the cities with their restaurants, brothels, homeless houses, hospitals and educational houses. Maybe that is what it should be - to become less and less of honest marriages, but more and more of prostitutes and women killing fetuses in the wombs. Maybe that what it should happen for hundreds and hundreds of thousands of people to sit in prisons, in general or solitary confinement, ruining their souls. Maybe, it's necessary so that the faith of Christ that teaches humility, patience, to endure insults, to do the nearest person what people want for themselves, to love him, to love enemies, to unite together, - maybe that what it should be so that faith of Christ, teaching this, would be passed to people by teachers, across hundreds of fighting among each other sects, in a form of absurd and immoral fables about the creation of the world and the human, about the punishment and atonement of it by Christ, about the establishment of such or such sacraments and rites. Maybe this is all so necessary and characteristic of humans as it is characteristic of ants to live in anthills, bees in the hives, to fight and work to fulfil the law of their lives. Maybe the same thing is necessary for people, and this is their law, too. And may the requirement of reason and conscience about the other, loving and blissful, life, - maybe that requirement is a dream and deception, and we shouldn't and mustn't think that people can live differently. At least that's what some people say. But the human heart does not believe this; and as always, it loudly screams against the false life, calls people to the life which require sincerity, reason and conscience, and it, even stronger, stronger than ever, screams in our time.

Centuries have passed, the millenniums, the eternity of time, while we did not exist. And suddenly we live, we love, we rejoice. We live, and the duration of this life, according to David, is 70 minuscule years; they will pass and we will disappear, and the eternity of time will again close the 70-year-old limit, and we won't be what we are now again, ever. And so, we are given to live

these 70 years at best, and maybe even just hours, to live in anguish and rage or in joy and love, to live with the recognition that all what we do is wrong and in the wrong way or with the knowledge that we have done albeit imperfectly and poorly but exactly what should be done and could be done in this life.

"Repent, Repent, Repent!" yelled John the Baptist back then; "repent" proclaimed Christ; "repent", proclaims the voice of God, the voice of conscience and reason. First of all, let each of us stop each own work or enjoyment, stop and think about what we do. Are we doing something that should, or, burning our life for nothing, - the life, given to us among two eternities of death?

I know that people put pressure on you from all sides and don't give you a moment of rest, and that it seems to you that, just like a horse on a wheel, you cannot stop, and although the wheel which is moving beneath you was rushed by yourself; I know that hundreds of voices will cry at you as soon as you'll try to stop, to come to your senses.

- "There's no time to think and reason, need to do," - one voice will shout.

- "We should not talk about ourselves and our desires, when business which you serve is a public case, a family matter, a matter of commerce, art, science, country. You must serve the shared purpose," - the other voice will shout.

- "All've been already attempted to think over, and nobody came up with anything, so just live, that's all," - the third voice will shout.

- "Think or don't think, you'll end up with the same: live a little and die; and therefore live for your pleasure. Do not think! If you will think, you'll see that this life is worse than no life, and you'll kill yourself. Live as it goes, but don't think ", the fourth voice will shout.

A fairy tale tells that when someone has found a treasure he was looking for, a thousand of fearful and seductive voices cried out around him to prevent him from taking that which gave him the happiness. In the same way, the

voices of worldly servants confuse the truth seeker when he had it already in mind. Don't listen to those voices. And in response to everything they can tell you, say to yourself one thing: Behind my life I see an infinity of time in which I didn't exist. Ahead of me there is the same infinite darkness, in which death is about to take and immerse me. Now I am in life and I can – I know that I can - can close my eyes and, not seeing anything, fall into the most evil and painful life, - or I can not only open my eyes to see, but I can see and observe all around me and chose the best and joyful life. And because, no matter what the voices tell me, no matter how the temptations seduce me, no matter how the life I've already started pulls me back, and no matter how my current life approves me, I will stop, look around and come to my senses.

And as soon as a person will tell this to himself, he'll see that he is not the only one who turns around and that before him, and with him, there are a lot and a lot of people, just like him, rethought and chose that best way of life, which is the only one that gives the blessing and leads to it.

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